

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

211447Z Dec 04

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 MADRID 004803

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INL, EUR/WE, EUR/PGI, EUR/ERA
JUSTICE FOR OIA AND AFMLS
TREASURY FOR FINCEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [SP](#) [EFIN](#)

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL STRATEGY REPORT
2004: SPAIN

REF: STATE 254401

I. SUMMARY: In 2004, Spain continued its efforts to enforce the 1988 UN Drug Convention as well as other EU conventions on counter narcotics trafficking. Spanish National Police, the Guardia Civil and Customs Services interdicted record amounts of cocaine, hashish, and heroin and performed numerous enforcement operations throughout Spain to arrest distributors of synthetic drugs, such as LSD and ecstasy. However, officials have acknowledged that Spain continued to be a significant transit point and top consumer of cocaine and hashish in Europe. This issue prompted the newly elected Socialist government to restructure its drug policy coordination body, the National Drug Plan (PND), by assigning responsibility of its harm reduction unit to the Ministry of Health and its supply reduction unit to a new Department of Security within the Ministry of Interior. The GOS ranks drug trafficking as one of its most important law enforcement concerns, and has continued to maintain excellent relations with U.S. law enforcement. Cooperation between GOS and USG officials on Spain's domestic narcotic efforts and joint enforcement efforts in Latin America is a top policy objective of the new Spanish government.

II. STATUS OF COUNTRY.

Spain remains a principal gateway for cocaine transported from Latin American countries, such as Columbia and Venezuela, or transshipped from West Africa through Morocco. Spanish police continue to seize large amounts of Moroccan hashish along Spain's southern coast, some of which is trafficked by illegal immigrants. The majority of heroin that arrives in Spain is transported via the Balkan route from Turkey. No coca is grown in Spain, and production of cannabis and opium is minimal. Illicit refining and manufacturing of drugs in Spain is also minimal although small-scale laboratories of synthetic drugs such as LSD are discovered and confiscated each year. Spain has a pharmaceutical industry that produces precursor chemicals. There is effective control of precursor shipments within Spain from the point of origin to destination, administered under the PND. Spain is a transit point to the U.S. for ecstasy and other synthetic drugs produced mainly in the Netherlands.

III. COUNTRY ACTIONS AGAINST DRUGS IN 2004.

POLICY INITIATIVES. Spanish policy on drugs is directed by the PND, which covers the years 2000 to 2008. The strategy, approved in 1999, expanded the scope of law enforcement activities, such as permitting sale of seized assets in advance of a conviction and allowing law enforcement to use informers. The strategy also outlined a system to reintegrate individuals who have overcome drug addictions into Spanish society. The strategy also targets money laundering and illicit commerce in chemical precursors, and calls for closer counter-narcotics cooperation with other European and Latin American countries. Following a review of the demand side of the PND in July 2004, the Government agreed to restructure the PND by placing its harm reduction unit under the authority of the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Health was particularly concerned about drug use among school children following a nationwide survey it conducted on drug use among 25,500 Spanish children aged 14 to 18. In September, officials revealed that the survey showed that within the last twelve months 36.1% of Spanish school children said they had used cannabis (double the percentage reported in 1995); 6.8% had taken cocaine; and less than one percent had tried heroin. In November, a European Union annual report on narcotics revealed that Spain was the top consumer of cocaine and cannabis in Europe. On drug supply, the Government placed its policymaking unit in the PSD under the competency of a new Department of Security within the Ministry of Interior to coordinate its policy agenda with counter-narcotic enforcement agencies. Officials have stated that it would consider additional revisions to the PND before it is comprehensively reviewed in 2008.

The National Central Drug Unit coordinates counter-narcotics

operations among various government agencies, including the Spanish National Guard, the Spanish National Police, and the Customs Service. Their cooperation appears to function well. There is no evidence of corruption of senior officials or their involvement in the drug trade.

In 2003, Spain and Portugal signed a Treaty of Cooperation to prevent drug consumption and to control the illegal trafficking of controlled substances. The Treaty establishes a joint "Hispano-Portuguese Commission" to exchange information, to coordinate intelligence gathering and professional training efforts.

LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS

Spanish officials at the Ministry of Interior reported October 26 that drug enforcement agencies seized 23,000 kg of cocaine, 223 kg of heroin, 531,000 kg of hashish, and 622,000 units of MDMA between January and August 2004. Exact interdiction statistics based on comprehensive data collected by the Civil Guard and Spanish Customs Agency will not be available, however, until March 2005.

The following are some notable cocaine seizures in 2004. On February 12, 2004, the Guardia Civil and the Spanish Customs Service discovered 5,735 kg of cocaine aboard the fishing vessel "Lugo" in Galicia. Seven Colombian nationals were arrested in this incident. On April 24, Spanish authorities interdicted a British-flagged sailing ship, the "Diaosa Maat" that contained 2,700 kg of cocaine. On March 27, the Spanish National Police interdicted a ship in the Port of Valencia carrying 3,280 kg of cocaine. On December 1, police officials discovered 3,100 kg aboard the "White Sands" shipping vessels in Galicia. They arrested 24 individuals including 11 Colombian nationals.

Although Spanish drug policy officials reported a decline in the number of interdictions of synthetic drugs, Spanish authorities seized large supplies of ecstasy. On July 22, Spanish national police seized nine kilograms of MDMA powder (approximately 180,000 pills) in the luggage of a Spanish passenger at Madrid's international airport. On September 1, the police arrested a Spanish passenger en route to the United States who was carrying 39,100 MDMA tablets at the Barcelona international airport. On August 18, police interdicted 41,000 MDMA pills carried by a Spanish passenger traveling to Puerto Rico. On December 1, Spanish police arrested a major international ecstasy dealer, Hank Romi, in Malaga by using information provided by the Madrid Country Office.

On July 7, the Guardia Civil discovered laboratories in three apartments in Madrid containing chemical materials used to produce cocaine. Eleven Colombian nationals were arrested in connection with the incident. Authorities also arrested a Romanian passenger in possession of 6.3 kg of heroin. The Spanish National Police interdicted 70 kg of heroin in Toledo on July 21.

Hashish trafficking appears to be particularly acute in the region of Catalonia and in the Costa del Sol (Sun Coast) in the province of Malaga. Drug enforcement officials have estimated that they captured 40,000 kg of hashish in drug raids in Barcelona, Tarragon, and Levante in 2004. Authorities in Malaga reported that they captured 21,813 kilograms and arrested 490 persons for drug-related crimes in 2004. Officials have acknowledged that hashish traffickers, primarily from North Africa, now use the coast of Catalonia more frequently than Spain's southern coast as an entry point for their trade because there are fewer counter-narcotic patrols along Catalonia's coast and along its border with France, where drugs can be more efficiently transported to other parts of Europe by road.

Some notable hashish interdictions include the capture of 3,030 kg of hashish in the Deletebre in Catalonia on March 21. Police arrested seven individuals in this incident. On September 7, Spanish counter-narcotics agents captured 1,100 kg of hashish in Guadalquivir in Sevilla. Police arrested eight Spanish citizens in the incident. On December 3, counter-narcotics agents captured 4,100 kg of hashish and arrested 27 nationals of France, Romania, Albania, Morocco, and Algeria in a nationwide drug investigation. Officials determined that those arrested were members of a narcotics mafia based in Marseilles.

AGREEMENTS AND TREATIES. Spain is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, and all of the convention's articles are applied in Spain. Spain is also a party to the 1990 Strasbourg Convention. Spain signed the UN Convention Against International Organized Crime and its protocols in 2000. A 1970 extradition treaty and its three supplements govern extradition between the U.S. and Spain. The U.S.-Spain Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty has been in force since 1993. The U.S. and Spain have also signed a Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement. On December 17, Spain and the United States signed

an additional MLAT on judicial assistance that will facilitate further mutual cooperation on drug trafficking cases.

Spain is a party to European Conventions on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, Extradition, the Transfer of Proceedings in Criminal Matters and the International Validity of Criminal Judgments. Spain has mutual legal assistance treaties or bilateral counter-narcotics agreements with most countries in Latin America, as well as with Morocco, Israel and Turkey. Spain approved March 14, 2003, the European Union-wide common arrest and detention order, which facilitates the transfer of prisoners and suspects among EU states. This law took effect on January 1, 2004.

Spain is a member of the UNDCP major donors group and the Dublin group. Spain also chairs the regional Dublin group for Central America and Mexico. Spain also funds programs through the Organization of American States' Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission. Spain pledged USD 100 million to support Plan Colombia in 2003 and has pledged to continue to support the program in the coming years. Spanish aid is targeted towards institutional strengthening of police and judicial forces, alternative development, and demand reduction. Spain sponsors numerous training courses for police and judicial authorities in Latin America and Morocco.

CULTIVATION/PRODUCTION. Coca leaf is not cultivated in Spain, and cannabis is grown in insignificant quantities. For example, on August 27, police officials arrested the owner of a farm in Oviedo where they located 28 mature marijuana plants, 250 grams of dried marijuana plants, and a small amount of hashish. Opium poppy is cultivated under strictly regulated conditions for research. Refining and manufacturing of cocaine and synthetic drugs is minimal, with some small-scale laboratories converting cocaine base to cocaine hydrochloride.

DRUG FLOW/TRANSIT. Spain is the major gateway to Europe for cocaine coming from Columbia, Peru, and Ecuador. Traffickers exploit Spain's close historic and linguistic ties with Latin America and its long southern coastline to transport drugs for consumption in Spain or distribution in other parts of Europe. Maritime vessel and containerized cargo shipments account for the bulk of the cocaine shipped to Spain. Spain remains a major transit point to Europe for hashish from Morocco; Spain's North African enclaves of Ceuta and Mellila are principle points of departure. Police officials acknowledge that traffickers are beginning to abandon traditional drug trade routes between the Strait of Gibraltar and the coasts of Huelva, Cadiz, Malaga, and Almeria, and are delivering hashish and other narcotics, to points along the coasts of Alicante, Valencia, Castellon de la Plana and Barcelona, where counter-narcotic sea patrols are less frequent. Spain's international airports in Madrid and Barcelona are a transit point for passengers who intend to traffic ecstasy and other synthetic drugs, mainly produced in the Netherlands, to the United States. These couriers, however, are typically captured before they leave Spain or when they arrive in the U.S.

DOMESTIC PROGRAMS. The national drug strategy identifies prevention as its principal priority. In that regard, PND continued its publicity efforts targeting Spanish youth. Spain's autonomous communities provide treatment programs for drug addicts, including methadone programs and needle exchanges. Prison rehabilitation programs also distribute methadone. The Government has also provided approximately 4.1 million euros to assist private, non-governmental organizations that carry out drug prevention and rehabilitation programs.

IV. U.S. POLICY INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS. U.S. goals and objectives for Spain are focused on maintaining and increasing the current excellent bilateral and multilateral cooperation in law enforcement and demand reduction. We seek to promote intensified contacts between officials of both countries involved in counter-narcotics and related fields. Latin America remains an important area for counter-narcotics cooperation. Spanish officials are working closely with the Narcotics Affairs Section in Peru and Bolivia.

THE ROAD AHEAD. The U.S. will continue to coordinate closely with Spanish counter-narcotics officials through the Madrid Country Office. Spain will continue to be a key player in the international fight against drug trafficking.

IV. STATISTICAL TABLES

Seizures	2001	2002	2003	2004(1)
Heroin (kg)	631	275	242	223
Cocaine (mt)	34	16	49	23
Hashish (mt)	514	564	727	531
MDMA (pills)	860,000	1,200,000	771,875	622,000

(1) Estimates based on the October 26 testimony of Spanish Minister of Interior Antonio Camacho before members of the Spanish congress and senate of the Joint Commission for the Study of the Problem of Drugs in Spain.
MANZANARES